

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 4TH JULY 2019 (6PM)

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**Present:**

Councillors: M J Hart (Chairman), N J Desmond, S Griffiths, I Hardiman, S Miah, T L Onslow, M Rayner, S E N Rook, D R Sheppard and P W M Young.

**Observers**

Councillors: H E Dyke, P Harrison and F M Oborski MBE.

**OS.11 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors:  
S J Chambers (Vice-Chairman), C E E Edginton-White and A Totty.

**OS.12 Appointment of Substitutes**

Councillor I Hardiman was a substitute for Councillor S J Chambers.  
Councillor S Miah was a substitute for Councillor A Totty.  
Councillor P W M Young was a substitute for Councillor C E E Edginton-White.

**OS.13 Declarations of Interests by Members**

Councillor D R Sheppard declared an Other Disclosable Interest (ODI) in agenda item no. 5 – Wyre Forest District Local Plan: Pre-Submission Publication, as he is a resident adjacent to Yew Tree Walk in Stourport. He would take no part in the discussion and would not vote on that item.

**OS.14 Minutes**

**Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**OS.15 Wyre Forest District Local Plan: Pre-Submission Publication**

The Committee considered a report from the Spatial Planning Manager which set out the documentation for re-opening the Local Plan Pre-Submission Publication consultation, referred to as the Regulation 19 consultation. Members acknowledged that this was the final stage of consultation before submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State.

The Committee also considered the progress in the preparation of: the Pre-Submission Publication Consultation (Regulation 19) documentation (as shown in background paper 16.1, and amendments in appendix 1 and 2 of the report); and the updated technical evidence base papers (as shown in appendix 4 of the report);

and the draft Consultation Plan for the Pre-Submission Publication consultation (as shown in appendix 3 of the report).

The Spatial Planning Manager presented the report. She explained that following receipt of responses to the Preferred Options consultation which took place during November and December 2018, it had become apparent that there were some important technical points which had been raised by statutory consultees, including Worcestershire County Council, which need to be addressed. This included issues to do with the transport modelling, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and viability modelling. She further explained that the updates to the various evidence base studies had led to sections of the Local Plan Pre-Submission Document having to be updated.

The Spatial Planning Manager outlined the changes made to the consultation version of the Local Plan and presented the draft consultation plan. Members were advised that a report would be presented to Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> July to approve the documents for consultation. She added that to avoid the summer holiday period, the six week consultation would take place from Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September to Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

The Head of Strategic Growth confirmed that the re-opening of the consultation would allow members of the public to submit their views on the updated pre-submission version of the Local Plan and updated evidence base. She added that unless people wanted to change or add to their comments, all responses received to the consultation in 2018 would still be valid. She confirmed that no late responses would be accepted.

Members fully scrutinised the report and welcomed the proposal for the postal distribution of information to be undertaken by Royal Mail and agreed that it would be beneficial for the information sent to households to be printed in colour. Members felt that an additional drop-in session should be held in Bewdley, to provide residents with an opportunity to attend any one of the sessions across the three towns within the District. There was full support from the Committee for the consultation plan.

**Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet that:**

**The Pre-Submission Publication consultation documentation, the updated technical evidence base studies, and the draft Consultation Plan be approved; subject to the following proposed amendments;**

- 1. the publicity leaflet for residents to be produced in colour;**
- 2. an additional drop-in session be held in Bewdley on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019, from 2pm to 4.30pm at Wribbenhall Parish Rooms;**

**In making these recommendations Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted that a final decision on the Plan to be submitted to the Secretary of State had to be taken by Council in 2020.**

Councillor P Harrison left the meeting at this point (7pm).

**OS.16 Treasury Management Review Panel**

The Corporate Director: Resources advised that the Treasury Management Review Panel would be formed again for the current municipal year. The first meeting of the Panel and training session for Members was scheduled to take place on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.

She said it was compulsory for Members of the Treasury Management Review Panel and the Audit Committee to attend at least one of the two Member Training sessions which would be held during the municipal year. Members were advised that the training would be carried out by the Council's external treasury management advisors, Link Asset Services.

**Agreed: Members to notify the Principal Committee and Member Services Officer if they would like to sit on the Panel for the current municipal year.**

**OS.17 Feedback from Cabinet**

**Agreed: The content of the Cabinet action list, following consideration of the recommendations from its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019, be noted.**

**OS.18 Work Programme**

The Committee reviewed the work programme for the current municipal year. The Chairman reminded Members that they could request items to come forward for in-depth scrutiny by submitting a scrutiny proposal form to the Principal Committee and Member Services Officer.

**OS.19 Press Involvement**

There were no future items for scrutiny that might require publicity.

**OS.20 Asset Management Strategy**

The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place which set out a proposal to agree the adoption of an Asset Management Strategy, as part of the Capital Strategy, to guide the Council in the overall management of assets within its developing portfolio of assets acquired through the Capital Portfolio Fund.

The Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place presented the report and advised Members that to date the Council had completed six acquisitions through the £25m Capital Portfolio Fund. He said that the current total spends and commitments from the fund were c£17.8m.

He added that the Council had a duty to ensure that the newly acquired assets were properly managed on a day to day basis, and that the Council had an agreed strategy for the overall maintenance of the portfolio of assets. He explained that to assist the Council and to build capacity and expertise within the property team, external consultants had been appointed to manage both the properties and the portfolio.

The Corporate Director: Resources advised Members that without the Asset Management Strategy to sit along side the Capital Portfolio Fund Strategy the authority would not be able to meet the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) statutory guidance. She added that the Strategy would enable the authority to maintain proper governance over the development of its assets and overall performance of the portfolio.

Councillor S Griffiths left the meeting at 7.26pm and returned at 7.28pm.

A discussion ensued. Members welcomed the Strategy and were assured that it had been developed in accordance with statutory guidelines. The Chairman endorsed the proposal and said that it was the responsible thing for the Council to do to ensure that the full benefit of owning the assets in terms of their capital and revenue values was realised by the authority.

The Committee fully supported the adoption of the document and welcomed the prospect of receiving bi-annual performance updates of the overall Capital Portfolio Fund.

**Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet that the proposed strategy should be adopted.**

**OS.21 Exempt Information**

**Decision: Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of “Exempt Information” as defined in paragraphs 2, 6 and 7 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.**

Councillor D Sheppard left the meeting at 7.32pm and returned at 7.34pm.

**OS.22 Disposal of Land in Stourport**

The Committee considered a confidential report from the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place which set out a proposal to dispose of land in Stourport.

The Committee agreed that it was imperative that the authority ensured that the site was only developed for the purposes intended. Members acknowledged that the proceeds from the disposal of the site would be a welcome addition to the Council's Evergreen Investment Fund to support future proposals which would contribute to the Medium Term Financial Strategy. There was unanimous support for the proposal.

**Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet that:**

**The proposed disposal should proceed.**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.50pm.